

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 SOE-02 DODE-00
SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 H-02
INT-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-20 STR-07 TRSE-00 /145 W
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R 261630Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6253
INFO DOE WASHDC
DOE GERMANTOWN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
ALL EC CAPITALS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 08157

USEEC

VIENNA FOR USIAEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, EEC
SUBJECT: EC COMMISSION REPORT ON THE PUBLIC DEBATES ON
- NUCLEAR ENERGY

1. IN A COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EC COMMISSION HAS
REPORTED THE CONCLUSIONS IT HAS DRAWN FROM THE PUBLIC
DEBATES ON NUCLEAR ENERGY CONDUCTED IN BRUSSELS IN NOVEMBER
1977 AND JANUARY 1978.

2. ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIFFICULTY OF DRAWING UNANIMOUSLY
ACCEPTABLE CONCLUSIONS, THE COMMISSION IDENTIFIES THE
FOLLOWING AS "SOME OF THE GOVERNING IDEAS":

A. NUCLEAR POWER APPEARS TO BE AN "INESCAPABLE NECESSITY,"
SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:
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(1) IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS ONE AMONG VARIOUS FORMS
OF ENERGY, AND IT SHOULD NOT BE ASSIGNED AN EXCESSIVE ROLE
PENDING DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER RENEWABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY
ACCEPTABLE ENERGY SOURCES.

(2) SAFETY REQUIREMENTS MUST CONTINUE TO BE EMPHA-

SIZED.

(3) DECISIONS ON NUCLEAR POWER SHOULD BE TAKEN "IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEMOCRATIC RULES," I.E., THE PARLIAMENTS AND ELECTED ASSEMBLIES.

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B. RESEARCH AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDS TO BE INCREASED FOR NEW FORMS OF ENERGY AND TO INCREASE COAL UTILIZATION. THIS IS TO REDUCE OIL USAGE, WHILE NOT "ALLOWING THE NUCLEAR SECTOR TO OCCUPY A POSITION OUT OF PROPORTION TO ITS IMPORTANCE."

C. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND THE HABITS OF CITIZENS NEED TO BE REDIRECTED TOWARD A NEW CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF ENERGY, IN PARTICULAR TOWARD CONSERVATION AND ENERGY-SAVING.

D. THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE KEPT FULLY INFORMED ON ENERGY MATTERS.

3. BASED ON THESE CONCLUSIONS, THE COMMISSION LISTED THE FOLLOWING MEASURES THAT IT IS TAKING:

A. "RESTATEMENT OF THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE FIELDS OF NUCLEAR SAFETY, RADIATION PROTECTION, UNCLASSIFIED

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AND NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY." THE COMMISSION NOTES THAT ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF ITS RESEARCH BUDGET IS DEVOTED TO NUCLEAR SAFETY AND RADIATION PROTECTION, AND THAT ABOUT 45 PERCENT OF IT IS DEVOTED TO NEW ENERGY SOURCES. FURTHER, IT IS PROPOSING A NEW INDIRECT ACTION RESEARCH PROGRAM IN LIGHT-WATER-REACTOR SAFETY (ABOUT \$20 MILLION OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD), AND AN INCREASE IN THE SAFETY WORK CARRIED OUT UNDER THE DIRECT ACTION PROGRAM BY THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTER. IT IS ALSO PROPOSING A NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM ON DECOMMISSIONING OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS (ABOUT \$14 MILLION OVER FIVE YEARS).

B. "IMPARTING A FRESH IMPETUS TO INITIATIVES WHICH ACCORD MORE PARTICULARLY WITH THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN THE DEBATES." THE COMMISSION URGES THE COUNCIL TO TAKE PRIORITY ACTION ON A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS THAT ARE ALREADY BEFORE IT. THESE PROPOSALS COVER TWO ITEMS ON ENERGY SAVING, A PROPOSAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS TO EXPLOIT ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, PROPOSALS ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE AND REPROCESSING, A PROPOSAL CALLING FOR CONSULTATIONS ON THE SITING OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, AND A PROPOSAL ON PHYSICAL PROTECTION. (COMMENT: NOTABLY

MISSING FROM THIS LIST IS THE COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL ON FAST BREEDER REACTOR DEVELOPMENT. FOR THAT MATTER, FAST BREEDERS ARE NOT MENTIONED ANYWHERE IN THE REPORT ON THE DEBATES).

C. "NEW PROPOSALS AND MEASURES DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE SOME OF THE WISHES EXPRESSED DURING THE DEBATES." THE COMMISSION IDENTIFIES TWO NEW STUDIES THAT IT INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE: ONE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE TRANSPORT, AND THE OTHER ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND

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ENERGY DEMAND. TO COPE WITH THE PLEA FOR BETTER COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PUBLIC, THE COMMISSION PROPOSES ATTENDANCE BY THE COMMISSION AT GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU AND REPRESENTATION BY ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALISTS ON THE EC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE MEMBERSHIP OF WHICH IS DUE TO BE RENEWED THIS YEAR.

4. THE COMMISSION VOWS TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS IN ITS COMMUNICATIONS ON ENERGY PROBLEMS. "IN PARTICULAR, EACH TIME IT INTRODUCES A MEASURE AIMED AT DEVELOPING NUCLEAR ENERGY OR ANY OTHER SOURCE OF ENERGY IT WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY PRESENT THE MEASURES WHICH IT HAS TAKEN

OR INTENDS TO TAKE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE RESEARCH SECTOR."

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE RATHER LUKEWARM ENDORSEMENT OF
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NUCLEAR POWER CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT IS NOT LIKELY TO
HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON MEMBER COUNTRY PROGRAMS, IT DOES
REPRESENT A SUBSTANTIAL TONING DOWN OF THE COMMISSION'S
PREVIOUS POSITION OF ALMOST ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FOR
NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT. THE ACCOMMODATION OF ENVIRON-
MENTAL CONCERNS AS REPORTED IN PARA 4 ABOVE IS NOT ONLY A
RESPONSE TO VIEWS EXPRESSED AT THE PUBLIC DEBATES, BUT IS,
WE UNDERSTAND, THE RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM COMMISSIONER
NATALI (RESPONSIBLE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR PROTECTION OF
THE ENVIRONMENT). THE COMMISSION APPEARS TO HAVE COMMITTED
ITSELF TO SOMETHING AKIN TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATE-
MENT (AND PLAN OF ACTION) FOR EVERY NEW ENERGY-RELATED
ACTION. THE EFFECT IS LIABLE TO BE A CONSIDERABLE SLOWDOWN
IN THE RATE OF NEW PROPOSALS COMING OUT OF THE COMMISSION.
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